The 'Framework' updates the 'Agreed Minutes on Defence Relations between India and the United States' signed in January 1995 and seeks to advance common security interests such as maintaining security and stability; defeating terrorism and violent religious extremism; preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and related materials, data and technologies; and protecting the free flow of commerce.

The 'Framework' seeks to *inter alia* enhance the capabilities of the Indian Armed Forces to deal with terrorism, disasters, and the spread of weapons of mass destruction, promote a defence trade, production and technology relationship with the US, exchange intelligence and perspectives on international security issues and defence policies of common interest, enlarge our options and bargaining power in the acquisition defence equipment and technology, and increase our standing in international affairs.

Spreading AIDS in Army Jawans

263. SHRI P. K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether with a view to weakening the jawans of army who have tightened their grip on the terrorist activities along the border, some foreign Government are conspiring to spread AIDS among them;

(b) if so, the number of cases in this regard that have come to light;

(c) whether sex workers are being utilized in such cases; and

(d) if so, the arrangements being made by the Government to avoid such a situation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) There is no medical evidence to believe the existence of such a conspiracy. The Armed Forces Medical Services have a vibrant Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) control programme and the status of HIV/AIDS in the Armed Forces is being closely monitored.

(b) to (d) In view of (a) above, question does not arise.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.